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AQIM Handbook

Start-Up

Work Location Set-Up for AQIM

Contents

Introduction

AQIM activities provide useful data on AQI program activities to local, regional, and national employees.

Success of results monitoring activities requires the following:

◆ Commitment of managers and employees at all levels,

◆ Strategic and performance planning throughout the organization,

◆ Involvement of stakeholders and customers including Congressional views and co-providers (i.e., Customs), and

◆ Adequate assistance from internal support groups--processes, requirements, facilitation, training, electronic support systems.

The activities outlined in this section and the procedures for data collection (under each pathway section of the Handbook) will help set up a work location to begin AQIM. The process selected for AQIM at each work site will become part of the ongoing operational activities for that location.

The first program being implemented at work locations to support risk monitoring is AQIM. AQIM is a process that will help APHIS become a results-oriented organization that uses information about performance and pathway risk of the AQI program to make regulatory decisions.

Activities for Implementing AQIM

Initially, a work location must make a commitment to follow the Agency's strategic course. This commitment is not just a set of prescribed activities, but is a new way of doing business.

Next, work locations should establish an AQIM coordinator to develop processes that are used to collect and analyze information. (See "Roles and Responsibilities" on **page-2-5**, for what a work location must do to implement AQIM.) Results should be shared and published for all employees to benchmark process and performance. AQIM Coordinators and teams should continue the fluid process of improving AQIM systems locally.

Based upon the analysis of the information, work locations set performance targets. These targets would have an overall goal to improve AQI performance. Work locations must:

◆ Identify goals and align them with regional and national goals,

◆ Determine actual results,

◆ Measure the gaps,

◆ Develop strategies for closing the gaps, and

◆ Develop analysis process for measuring goals and results.

Collecting information becomes an ongoing activity with the processes being continually evaluated and revised. There must be a continual cycle of:

◆ Assessing and evaluating process,

◆ Identifying other relevant sources of information,

◆ Recommending risk management options, and

◆ Implementing and coordinating work change activities.

Use the following start-up activities along with the roles and responsibilities and the checklist in this section as guides when implementing AQIM.

1. Develop a common understanding of AQIM. Work with local management teams and employee representatives to conduct meetings or use other ways of communicating to all employees at the work location. Introduce the who, why, when, and where of results monitoring and AQIM. For help, contact the Regional AQIM Manager and members of the National AQIM Team.

2. Inform brokers, other government agencies, and representatives from private industry that they will be included. Use a positive approach about their involvement and explain the advantages of

monitoring. But, be realistic about how the new procedures affect timeliness, and holds on imports for monitoring that may not have been held in the past.

3. Select specific individuals for the AQIM coordinator roles at each work site. Refer to **Roles and Responsibilities** in this section beginning on **page 2-5**. Refer to **Appendix B** for additional roles. The primary roles are:

❖ AQIM Coordinator

❖ Assistant AQIM Coordinator, if needed

4. Prepare and document a standard operating procedure (SOP) that details selected sampling processes, joint inspection procedures (if applicable), steps to resolve issues and concerns, etc. Document these details in the SOP. Keep a copy of the SOP in this Handbook. Refer to **Appendix D** for samples or examples of standard operating procedures. Use **Appendix D** as a guide for format and suggested content. The standard components of an SOP are:

❖ Purpose

❖ Background

❖ Guidelines (unit of inspection, sample size, operational norms)

❖ Sampling procedures

❖ Data collection and entry procedures

❖ Personnel and resources

❖ Quality control

5. Meet with the pest identifier for each work site. If not already "URGENT," establish details of a "PROMPT" pest identification process when pests are encountered from AQIM sampling.

6. Acquire the necessary equipment and supplies to support Epi Info, the software tool used to gather information for AQIM (Refer to **page 1-45** for a description of Epi Info.), such as:

❖ Computer--486 processor or better, with at least 10 Megabytes of free hard drive (to run software for Epi Info), and no special RAM memory needs

❖ Disks--Six 3.5 inch

❖ Additionally, in order to access data in the automated Short-term Reporting Tool (SRT), the computer system must have LAN or RLD access and connection. Refer to **Appendix J** for more details about the SRT.
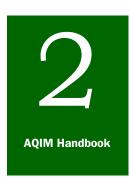
The following supplies can be obtained from a regional or headquarter contact.

❖ Epi Info software

❖ AQIM Handbook, which contains guidelines for using Epi Info (The AQIM Handbook can be accessed electronically on the Internet at the following URL:

http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppq/manuals/pdf_files/ AQIM_Chapters.htm

Pages from the AQIM Handbook can be printed from this URL)

❖ Data entry forms for AQIM with instructions for specific pathways. See examples of data entry forms behind each pathway section of this Handbook. These forms have been printed to enable you to remove, photocopy, and reuse them. They are also available on disk from your local AQIM coordinator.

❖ Implementation package for the AQIM sampling process

7. Contact the Regional Representatives on the AQIM National Team to set up the Epi Info software for data entry and analysis, to install Epi Info, and to train data entry personnel. See **Appendix B** for a list of members of the AQIM National Team. Refer to Epi Info Installation in **Appendix F** and Epi Info User Guide under Data Collection and Maintenance section under each pathway section of this Handbook.

8. Currently, the AQIM Handbook is only updated on the Internet, and paper editions may include old information. Always check the electronic version of the AQIM Handbook on the Interent for the most current information.

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AQIM Handbook

Roles and Responsibilities

Introduction

Given that AQI monitoring is a key component to conducting statistically sound risk assessments, it is essential to form internal structures to ensure that monitoring activities continue. Managers (i.e. supervisors, Port Directors, SPHDs) should become involved with results monitoring activities and should take an active role in the tasks, issues, and goals of AQIM. The following roles and responsibilities are suggested for collecting, recording, organizing, storing, and analyzing results monitoring data as part of the AQIM program. The numbers and roles may vary among work locations based on the size and activity of a work location.

◆ AQIM Coordinator

◆ Assistant AQIM Coordinator

AQIM Coordinator

AQIM Coordinators:

◆ Work with management and personnel at the work location to produce a standard operating procedure (SOP) for implementing AQIM at each work site.

◆ Help with training of employees.

◆ Work with management to communicate to all personnel at the work location the importance of AQIM and the sampling process.

◆ Implement and coordinate the established sampling process, and monitor the sampling for adherence to proper sampling techniques.

◆ Help resolve work site concerns and issues that directly or indirectly involve results monitoring activities.

◆ Coordinate and facilitate with local managers, supervisor(s), employee representatives, any change or revision (major or minor) to the results monitoring activities.

◆ Serve as the first contact point for answering basic questions about Epi Info software and data entry. This responsibility requires that the AQIM coordinator be familiar with the basics of Epi Info software such as, starting the program and knowing

what data entry screens are needed, how data entry occurs, and basic data analysis procedures. At larger work locations, serves as the central collection point from multiple work sites.

◆ Arrange and coordinate data entry of AQIM records for all work sites, including installing Epi Info, collecting data, maintaining data, analyzing data, and preparing reports.

◆ Maintain and archive all record files for Epi Info in a timely manner, including sending copies of data files on a regular basis, monthly, to Riverdale, Maryland.

◆ Report survey results to work location personnel. This responsibility involves running analysis procedures on Epi Info and the SRT and preparing written material or facilitating meetings to discuss implications for AQI decision-making.

◆ Serve as the main contact point for PPQ, QPAS in Riverdale, Maryland, and for regional personnel involved with results monitoring activities.

Assistant AQIM Coordinator

Helps an AQIM Coordinator perform their responsibilities as needed. Large ports with multiple work sites may have more than one Assistant AQIM Coordinator.

Checklist

The following checklist provides a general guide for starting AQIM. All listed activities may not apply to all work locations. These activities have contributed to the successful implementation of AQIM at many sites.

TABLE 2-1: Checklist for Roles and Responsibilities

Start-Up Activities	Who Is Involved?	Date/ Time Line Determined By Work Location
Meet and develop a common understanding of AQIM.	◆ Port Director initiates meetings ◆ Work with employee representatives, Port management, and Customs (if applicable) ◆ Have Regional or National AQIM Coordinator facilitate the meeting (see **Appendix B** for a list).	
Inform and include external customers and stakeholders.	◆ Port managers and officers ◆ Impacted brokers, government agencies, private industry	
Select an AQIM coordinator and assistant.	Port management	
Establish a risk management team to review local operations based on monitoring results.	◆ Port managers ◆ AQIM Coordinator ◆ Employee representatives	
Write standard operating procedures. (Refer to **Appendix D**)	◆ AQIM Coordinator and Risk Management Team ◆ Customs Compliance Measurement Representatives, if applicable ◆ Regional Coordinator and the AQIM National Team may assist	
Develop a training plan for the employees at work locations.	◆ Port management, AQIM Coordinator and Risk Management Team ◆ Customs Compliance Measurement Representatives, if applicable.	

TABLE 2-1: Checklist for Roles and Responsibilities (continued)

Start-Up Activities	Who Is Involved?	Date/ Time Line Determined By Work Location
Train employees to carry out AQI monitoring.	◆ Those individuals specified in a training plan. ◆ Regional Coordinator and AQIM National Team may be involved.	
Install Epi Info and train data entry personnel. (Refer to **Appendix E** and Epi Info User Guide under Data Collection and Maintenance subsections under the pathway sections of this Handbook.)	AQIM Coordinator with assistance as needed.	
Set a date to begin monitoring and collecting data.	AQIM Coordinator and Risk Management Team.	
Begin monitoring and collecting data	◆ Port Officers ◆ AQIM Coordinator ◆ Customs Officers, if applicable	
Enter information into Epi Info data base. ◆ Enter data from paper forms into Epi Info computer software. ◆ Transfer Pest Identification numbers to Epi Info data base, as necessary. (Refer to Epi Info User Guides in this handbook under the subsection Data Collection and Maintenance under the pathway sections.)	◆ Individual responsible for data entry ◆ Port Identifier and AQIM Coordinator	
Send Epi Info data files to Riverdale	AQIM Coordinator	Monthly
Analyze data and prepare report.	AQIM Coordinator	Monthly
Communicate monitoring results to work location personnel. Facilitate discussion of what results mean and implications for work location decisions.	AQIM Coordinator and Port managers	Quarterly
Set port performance targets based on monitoring feedback.	◆ Port managers ◆ Port officers ◆ AQIM Coordinator ◆ Employee representatives	Annually